

Message Text

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EXDIS

FOR AMBASSADOR LODGE AND MR. BARBOUR EUR/WE

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, VT
SUBJECT: AMBASSADOR LODGE'S CONSULTATIONS WITH VATICAN
OFFICIALS

1. IN PREPARATION FOR YOUR FORTHCOMING CONSULTATIONS WITH VATICAN OFFICIALS, YOU MIGHT WISH REQUEST BRIEFINGS ON FOLLOWING ITEMS DURING CONSULTATION IN WASHINGTON, MARCH 15:

2. LATEST US APPRAISAL OF LEBANON: HOLY SEE CONTINUES MONITORING DEVELOPMENTS THERE WITH WARY EYE. IT REMAINS SUSPICIOUS OF SYRIAN INTENTIONS RE LEBANESE SOVREIGNTY AND THIS ACCOUNTS FOR FACT THAT POPE HAS NOT YET SPECIFICALLY ENDORSED RECENT CEASEFIRE AND RELATED POLITICAL AGREEMENTS OBTAINED THROUGH SYRIAN AUSPICES. NEVERTHELESS, POPE AND HOLY SEE HAVE BOTH PRIVATELY AND PUBLICLY URGED CHRISTIANS TO FOLLOW ROAD OF MODERATE REFORM AND RECONCILIATION.

3. PROGRESS IN EAST-WEST RELATIONS: "FOREIGN MINISTER" CASAROLI REMAINS INTENSELY INTERESTED IN COURSE OF ONGOING NEGOTIATIONS ON SALT AND MBFR AND IN US PRESSURES ON SOVIETS TO IMPLEMENT BASKET III PROVISIONS OF CSCE FINAL ACT. IN THIS CONNECTION, YOU MIGHT WISH OBTAIN UPDATE OF STATE 043807 ON BASIS OF WHICH WE BRIEFED (ROME 3705) CASAROLI ON MARCH 3 (E.G., WILL SECRETARY RETURN TO MOSCOW SOON? HAVE PROSPECTS FOR SALT AGREEMENT IMPROVED?).

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4. US PERSPECTIVES ON NEXT STEPS IN MIDDLE EAST: VATICAN HAS PUBLICLY ENDORSED USG'S STEP-BY-STEP NEGOTIATIONS FOR MIDDLE EAST PEACE AND HAS PRIVATELY ENCOURAGED EGYPTIAN PRESIDENT SADAT'S ROLE IN THESE NEGOTIATIONS. IN VIEW OF APRIL 7 MEETING OF POPE WITH SADAT, HOLY SEE WOULD WELCOME BRIEFING ON CURRENT US PERSPECTIVES ON NEXT STEPS IN NEGOTIATION PROCESS.

5. US ASSESSMENT OF DEVELOPMENTS IN SPAIN: BOTH SUBSTITUTE SECRETARY OF STATE BENELLI AND CASAROLI ARE FOLLOWING SPANISH DEVELOPMENTS VERY CLOSELY. (CASAROLI HAS INFORMED US THAT GOS HAS INDICATED DESIRE TO RESUME NEGOTIATIONS ON DRAFT CONCORDAT.) IN YOUR CONSULTATIONS WITH THEM, THEY WOULD WELCOME HAVING A US ASSESSMENT OF POLITICAL EVOLUTION THERE. VOLPE

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